

Please do not lift restrictions on media ownership, as envisioned by proceeding 02-277.

Around the world, the United States is already widely criticized for its poor regulation of media companies. At a time when Americans desperately need information from a wider array of news organizations, the FCC is proposing a reduction in even the weak regulations that do exist. The "free speech" argument is a far better justification for stronger regulations than weaker regulations: if I wanted to buy a radio station but couldn't afford it, could I sue someone because my free speech rights had been violated? FOX News is rich, and I am not. They are heard, and I am not. The government should lower the bar for new, independent media, instead of consolidating the power of existing media titans.

The right to free speech is rapidly losing its meaning in this country, because the right to be heard depends increasingly on the wealth of the speaker. Please do not aggravate this problem by scaling back media controls any further. Thank you.